

**REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL
BIOTECHNOLOGY INFORMATION
FORUMS
2007-08**

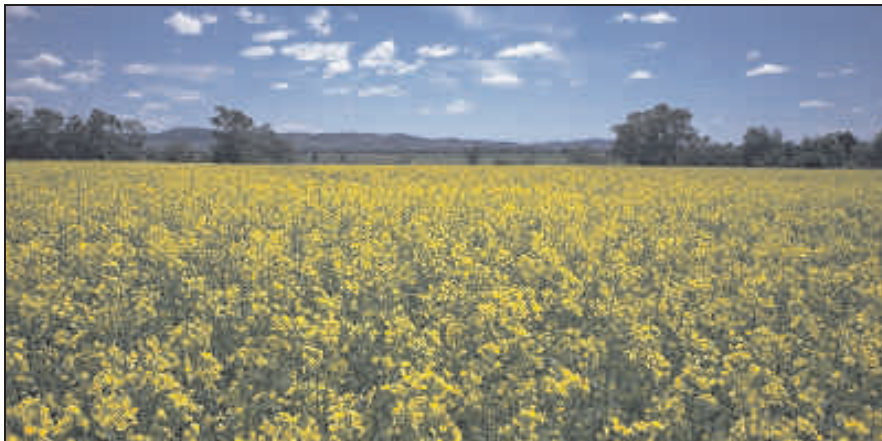


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INTRODUCTION

Three regional information forums on agricultural biotechnology were run in each of six states during 2007-08. The forums were funded and supported by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), under Australia's National Biotechnology Strategy (NBS). Agricultural organisations in each state coordinated their respective regional events commissioned by DAFF (see list of coordinating organisations on page 3). This summary report is an overview of the activities undertaken in each state.

The forums supported the themes in DAFF's *Biotechnology Strategy for Agriculture, Food and Fibre* (BSAFF August 2003), in particular *Theme 2 Improving Rural and Regional Australia's Understanding of Biotechnology Issues*. The forums were intended to address the need for accurate and balanced information on agricultural biotechnology in rural and regional Australia and assist in decision making about whether to adopt this technology.

The forums presented debates, speeches and discussion on topics relevant to biotechnology. The panel of speakers and presenters for each forum were chosen to provide credibility and expertise to cover the topics in a balanced and well informed manner. The speakers for each forum were selected by the coordinating organisations in each state in consultation with DAFF.

The forums drew upon information available in studies commissioned by DAFF under the NBS (see, <http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/biotechnology>). Topics included, but were not limited to:

- *Overview of agricultural biotechnology*
- *Regulation of biotechnology including GM crops and food*
- *Marketing of GM crops*
- *Segregation and co-existence of GM and non-GM crops*
- *Agronomic cost/benefit of GM crops*
- *On ground experience with GM crops*

In consultation with DAFF, the coordinating organisations from each state developed a set of targeted questions to survey participants' expectations of the forums and their information needs. Participants were also asked to evaluate the forums.

Each coordinating organisation provided DAFF with a report outlining the key issues and outcomes from the forums, including the results of the participant evaluations. These reports enabled the department to be informed on matters such as participants' concerns, perceptions, interests, information requirements and information channels relating to agricultural biotechnology. This report combines the findings of the state forums and provides an overview of the information provided in those reports.

The New South Wales forums held during September 2007 provided a pilot for the later forums, and were undertaken under the title "Making an Informed Choice: Growing GM Canola."

The individual State Governments are responsible for assessing the market and trade impact of GM crops, and may place moratoria on the growing of GM crops within their state.

GM cotton has been grown in Queensland and New South Wales since 1996 and around 95% of cotton crops grown in these states' are GM varieties. The forums held in Queensland focused broadly on a range of biotechnology issues, while the southern states focused on GM canola. Hence, the information presented at the Queensland forums differed greatly from the rest.

COORDINATING ORGANISATIONS

The Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry commissioned the following organisations:

New South Wales	Grain Growers Association and the Producers Forum for Biotechnology Access
Victoria	Victorian Farmers' Federation (VFF)
South Australia	South Australian Farmers' Federation (SAFF)
Western Australia	Pastoralists and Graziers Association (PGA) and WA Farmers Federation (WAFF)
Tasmania	Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association (TFGA)
Queensland	AgForce QLD

PROGRAM AND PRESENTERS

State	Location	Date	No. of Attendees	Guest Speakers
New South Wales	Parkes	25 September 2007	18	<p>Ms Paula Fitzgerald <i>Agrifood Awareness Australia</i></p> <p>Mr Andrew Broad <i>Nuffield scholar and farmer</i></p> <p>Mr John Cote <i>Canadian farmer and agronomist</i></p> <p>Mr Jeff Bidstrup <i>Cotton and grain grower from QLD</i></p>
	Beckom	26 September 2007	32	<p>Mr Phil Clamp <i>Quality Assurance Manager, Graincorp Operations Ltd</i></p> <p>Dr Chris Preston <i>National Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group</i></p>
	Cootamundra	27 September 2007	25	<p>Graham Brookes <i>Principal of PG Economics, UK</i></p> <p>Mr Max Foster <i>Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i></p> <p>Professor Jim Pratley <i>Charles Sturt University</i></p>
Victoria	Dookie	19 February 2008	51	<p>Mr Geoff Kendall <i>VFF Grains Executive</i></p> <p>Professor Richard Roush <i>Dean of Agriculture, Melbourne University</i></p>
	Swan Hill	20 February 2008	17	<p>Mr Scott Day <i>Canadian farmer and agronomist</i></p> <p>Ass. Prof. Mark Lunney <i>University of New England</i></p>
	Murtoa	21 February 2008	39	<p>Mr Phil Clamp <i>Quality Assurance Manager, Graincorp Operations Ltd</i></p> <p>Dr Chris Preston <i>National Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group</i></p>

South Australia	Keith	25 February 2008	21	Dr Trevor Garnett <i>Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics</i>
	Kadina	26 February 2008	38	Dr Andrew Jacobs <i>Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics</i>
	Lock	27 February 2008	26	Mr David Hubbard <i>Primary Industries and Resources South Australia</i>
	Nuriootpa	28 February 2008	19	Mr Geoff Masters <i>Client Services, ABB Grain Ltd</i> Dr Chris Preston <i>National Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group</i>
Western Australia	Dalwallinu	4 March 2008	78	Mrs Julie Newman <i>Chair of Network of Concerned Farmers</i>
	Corrigin	5 March 2008	71	Dr Phil Davies <i>Researcher, Adelaide University</i>
	Dongara	6 March 2008	90	Mr Alan Marshal <i>Farmer, Lake Grace</i> Mr Bill Crabtree <i>Agricultural Consultant</i> Professor Richard Roush <i>Dean of Agriculture, Melbourne University</i> Mr Jeff Bidstrup <i>Chair of Producers Forum</i>
Tasmania	Kempton	27 May 2008	1	Dr Alan Richardson <i>CSIRO Plant Industry</i>
	Burnie	28 May 2008	9	Dr Lucy Carter <i>Research Consultant, Ethics Training & Consultancy Australia</i>
	Launceston	29 May 2008	21	Ms Alexandra Pelvin <i>Biotechnology Australia</i> Mr Robert Curtotti <i>Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i>

Queensland	Dalby	1 April 2008	66	Prof Alan Bell <i>CSIRO</i> Dr Lucy Carter <i>Research Consultant, Ethics Training & Consultancy Australia</i>
	Emerald	2 April 2008	53	Dr Peter Twine <i>CEO, Sugar Cane CRC</i> Mr David Thomason <i>Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA)</i>
	Mackay	3 April 2008	22	Mr Phil Clamp <i>Quality Assurance Manager, Graincorp Operations Ltd</i> Prof Trevor Stevenson <i>Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology</i>

See **Appendix 1** for speaker biographies.

FORUM EVALUATIONS

Participants at each forum were asked to complete an evaluation form. The questions were targeted at surveying participants' expectations of the forums, their opinions on biotechnology and their information needs. Results of the evaluations are recorded below. Part one reports the effectiveness of the forums in delivering relevant and useful information; Part two reports participant's opinions about agricultural biotechnology.

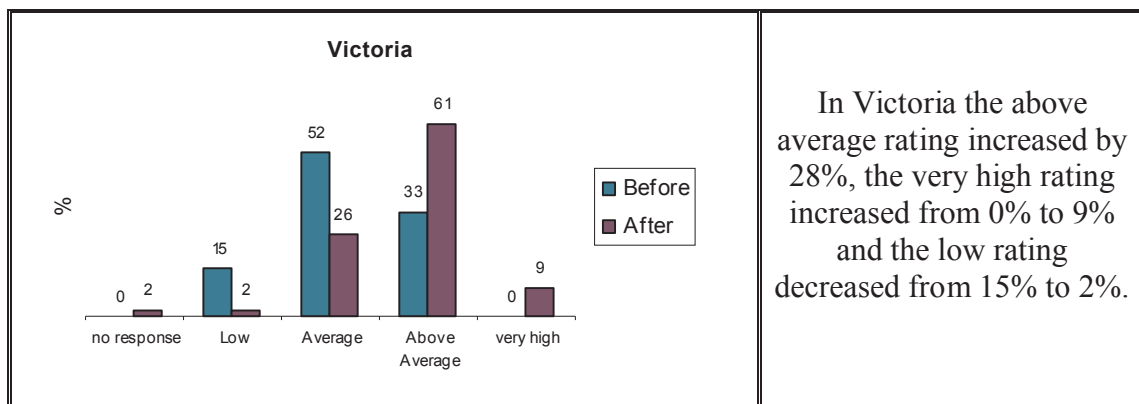
The following numbers of surveys were received:

NSW	—	50 responses received from a total attendance of 75
VIC	—	46 responses received from a total attendance of 107
SA	—	44 responses received from a total attendance of 104
WA	—	145 responses received from a total attendance of 239
TAS	—	26 responses received from a total attendance of 31
QLD	—	74 responses received from a total attendance of 141.

PART 1: FEEDBACK ON THE EFFECTIVENESS AND RELEVANCE OF FORUMS

ATTENDEE'S KNOWLEDGE BEFORE AND AFTER FORUM

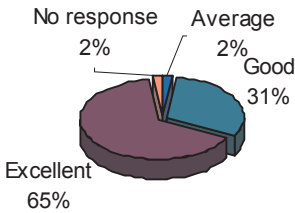
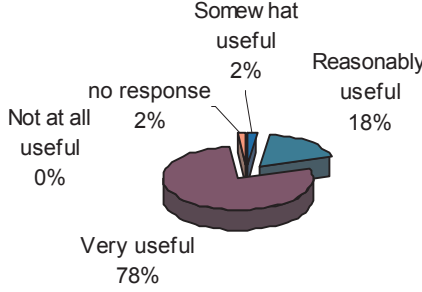
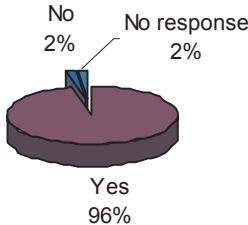
Attendees at forums in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia were asked to rate their knowledge of GM prior to the GM forums, as well as their knowledge post-forum. The charted results illustrate that the forums were very successful in increasing people's knowledge.

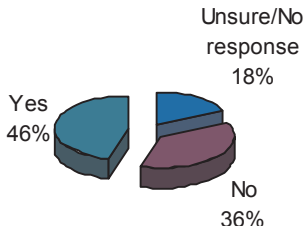
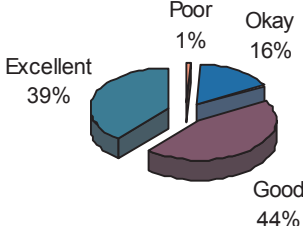


<p style="text-align: center;">New South Wales</p> <table border="1"> <caption>New South Wales - Meeting Rating</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Before (%)</th> <th>After (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>no response</td> <td>2</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>very low</td> <td>6</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>low</td> <td>23</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>good</td> <td>56</td> <td>62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>very good</td> <td>13</td> <td>33</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Before (%)	After (%)	no response	2	2	very low	6	0	low	23	2	good	56	62	very good	13	33	<p>In New South Wales, 69% of respondents thought that their knowledge before the meeting rated as 'good' or 'very good.' This increased to 96% after the forums.</p>			
Rating	Before (%)	After (%)																				
no response	2	2																				
very low	6	0																				
low	23	2																				
good	56	62																				
very good	13	33																				
<p style="text-align: center;">South Australia</p> <table border="1"> <caption>South Australia - Meeting Rating</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Before (%)</th> <th>After (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>no response</td> <td>2</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average</td> <td>50</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Above Average</td> <td>34</td> <td>64</td> </tr> <tr> <td>very high</td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Before (%)	After (%)	no response	2	11	Low	7	0	Average	50	18	Above Average	34	64	very high	7	7	<p>In South Australia, the above average rating increased by 30% and the low rating decreased from 7% to 0%.</p>			
Rating	Before (%)	After (%)																				
no response	2	11																				
Low	7	0																				
Average	50	18																				
Above Average	34	64																				
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<p style="text-align: center;">Queensland</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Queensland - Meeting Rating</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Before (%)</th> <th>After (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>no response</td> <td>0</td> <td>2.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>very low</td> <td>2.7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>low</td> <td>23</td> <td>2.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>neutral</td> <td>20.3</td> <td>9.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>High</td> <td>48.6</td> <td>68.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Very high</td> <td>5.4</td> <td>16.2</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Before (%)	After (%)	no response	0	2.7	very low	2.7	0	low	23	2.7	neutral	20.3	9.5	High	48.6	68.9	Very high	5.4	16.2	<p>In Queensland the high rating increased from 48.6% to 68.9% and the very high rating increased from 5.4% to 16.2%.</p>
Rating	Before (%)	After (%)																				
no response	0	2.7																				
very low	2.7	0																				
low	23	2.7																				
neutral	20.3	9.5																				
High	48.6	68.9																				
Very high	5.4	16.2																				
<p style="text-align: center;">Tasmania - speakers presented information in a way that increased awareness of biotechnology</p> <table border="1"> <caption>Tasmania - Awareness of Agricultural Biotechnology</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>strongly agree</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>agree</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>undecided</td> <td>19%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>disagree</td> <td>15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>strongly disagree</td> <td>8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage (%)	strongly agree	35%	agree	23%	undecided	19%	disagree	15%	strongly disagree	8%	<p>Tasmanian attendees were asked if their awareness of agricultural biotechnology had increased. 35% of attendees strongly agreed that their awareness of biotechnology had increased as a result of attending the forum.</p>									
Response	Percentage (%)																					
strongly agree	35%																					
agree	23%																					
undecided	19%																					
disagree	15%																					
strongly disagree	8%																					

QUALITY OF FORUM

States took varied approaches when asking attendees for their impression on the quality of the forum.

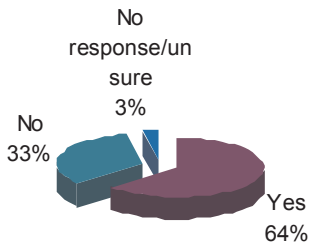
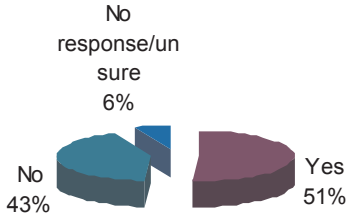
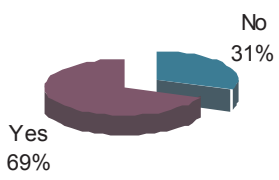
<p style="text-align: center;">NSW - rate overall quality of speakers and facilitator</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Excellent</td> <td>65%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good</td> <td>31%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Percentage	Excellent	65%	Good	31%	Average	2%	No response	2%			
Category	Percentage												
Excellent	65%												
Good	31%												
Average	2%												
No response	2%												
<p style="text-align: center;">NSW - How useful was the information presented?</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Very useful</td> <td>78%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Reasonably useful</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Somewhat useful</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>no response</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not at all useful</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Percentage	Very useful	78%	Reasonably useful	18%	Somewhat useful	2%	no response	2%	Not at all useful	0%	<p>NSW asked attendees their attitudes on the usefulness of information as well as their impressions on the quality of the speakers. 78% of respondents rated the information as ‘very useful’ and 96% said the quality of the speakers was good or excellent.</p>
Category	Percentage												
Very useful	78%												
Reasonably useful	18%												
Somewhat useful	2%												
no response	2%												
Not at all useful	0%												
<p style="text-align: center;">Vic - Did the forums provide relevant information on GM cropping?</p>  <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>96%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Category	Percentage	Yes	96%	No	2%	No response	2%	<p>Victoria asked attendees if they found the information easy to understand and whether they felt relevant information had been provided on GM cropping. 96% of respondents found the information relevant, with 94% adding that the information provided was easy to understand.</p>				
Category	Percentage												
Yes	96%												
No	2%												
No response	2%												

<p>SA - Did the forum provide balanced and credible information in an easy to understand manner?</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>36%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unsure/No response</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Yes	46%	No	36%	Unsure/No response	18%	<p>SA asked attendees if the forum provided balanced and credible information in an easy to understand manner. This evaluation showed that while the SA forums were very successful in increasing the knowledge of those attending (see above), only 46% of the attendees felt there was sufficient credible information or felt the forums were too one-sided in favour of GM.</p>		
Response	Percentage										
Yes	46%										
No	36%										
Unsure/No response	18%										
<p>WA - how would you rate forum?</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Excellent</td> <td>39%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Good</td> <td>44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Okay</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Poor</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Percentage	Excellent	39%	Good	44%	Okay	16%	Poor	1%	<p>WA asked for a straightforward quality rating. 83% rated the forum as Good or Excellent and 82% said that the forums provided them new information.</p>
Rating	Percentage										
Excellent	39%										
Good	44%										
Okay	16%										
Poor	1%										

Although different approaches to gaining quality information were utilised the results were uniform – the quality of all the forums were considered a high standard.

PART 2: PARTICIPANT VIEWS AND CONCERNS ABOUT AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

<p style="text-align: center;">SA - do you believe GM crops pose unresolved issues or areas of concern?</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">No response/un sure 3%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No 33%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes 64%</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">In SA 64% of respondents felt there were still unresolved issues or areas of concern.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Vic- Do GM crops pose unresolved issues or areas of concern?</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">No response/un sure 6%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No 43%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes 51%</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The division between those who feel there are unresolved issues or areas of concern were very close in Victoria. 51% said yes, 43% said no, and 6% were yet to make up their mind.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">WA - do you believe GM crops pose unresolved issues or areas of concern?</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">No 31%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Yes 69%</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Of the 69% of WA respondents that still had concerns about GM; 19% said they had health concerns; 14% had concerns about market impacts; 14% said they were concerned about environmental impacts; 8% were concerned about herbicide resistance; and 6% were concerned about legal ramifications (participants were able to choose more than one).</p>

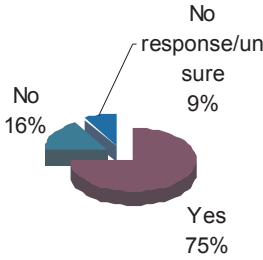
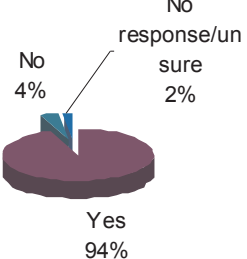
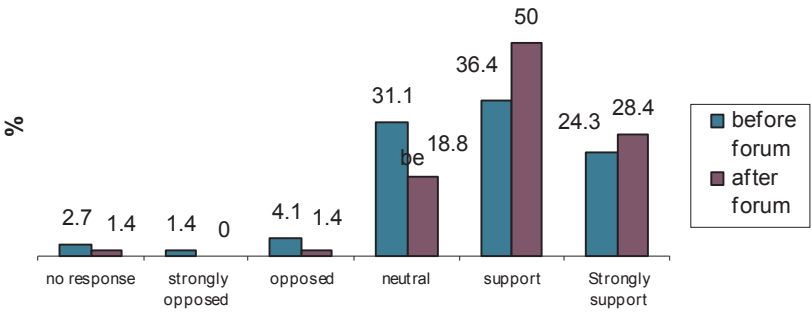
COMMON CONCERNS RAISED IN DISCUSSIONS

Discussion at the forums allowed participants to express their views and seek further information from presenters. For example:

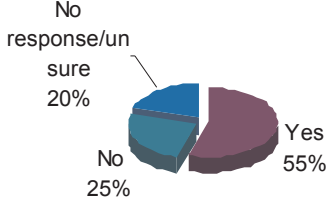
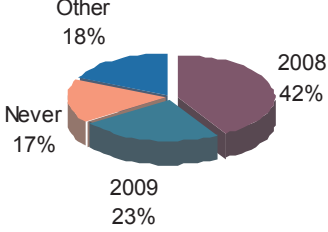
- Some farmers were worried about the likelihood of herbicide resistant weeds developing after extended use of herbicide resistant GM varieties, such as Round-up Ready Canola.
- A minority of participants expressed a lack of confidence in the current approach to the regulation of GM food products by Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) and concerns about the need for clearer labelling of food items containing GM.
- Some farmers were frustrated by the higher cost of GM canola seed; however it was acknowledged that these initial start-up costs could be offset by higher yields and management benefits (ie. weed and disease control).
- Some participants were concerned about possible restrictions on market access to countries that will not take GM product. Evidence provided at the forum showed that most international markets accept approved GM products.
- There was interest in management options that would ensure that unintended pollination of GM crops was avoided.
- Following from the point above, there was disagreement among participants as to whether farmers growing approved GM canola or GM-free farmers should have to cover the costs of preventing cross-pollination and other identity-preservation costs.
- Organic farmers voiced concerns that growing GM crops in Australia would tarnish the reputation of Australian organic products and may affect their sales on the international market. [GM rules.....](#)
- Many participants said their major concern with biotechnology is the control of technology exerted by a few major biotechnology companies over 'genotypes.' There was particular aggravation about the role of Technological Use Agreements and the need to pay royalties to large biotechnology companies that have a monopoly on the product.

See **Appendix 2** for a selection of comments provided by participants on their evaluation sheets.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

<p>SA - do you believe that GM crops have the potential to deliver benefits?</p>  <p>A 3D pie chart showing the distribution of responses in South Australia. The largest slice is 'Yes' at 75%, followed by 'No' at 16%, and 'No response/unsure' at 9%.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>16%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response/unsure</td> <td>9%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Yes	75%	No	16%	No response/unsure	9%	<p>Despite the SA Government extending the moratorium on GM crops, 75% of respondents believed GM crops had potential benefits.</p>													
Response	Percentage																					
Yes	75%																					
No	16%																					
No response/unsure	9%																					
<p>Vic - Do you believe GM crops have the potential to deliver benefits?</p>  <p>A 3D pie chart showing the distribution of responses in Victoria. The largest slice is 'Yes' at 94%, followed by 'No' at 4%, and 'No response/unsure' at 2%.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>94%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response/unsure</td> <td>2%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Yes	94%	No	4%	No response/unsure	2%	<p>In Victoria, despite over half the respondents feeling there were unresolved concerns, 94% still recognised that there were potential benefits from GM crops.</p>													
Response	Percentage																					
Yes	94%																					
No	4%																					
No response/unsure	2%																					
<p>Queensland - support for biotechnology</p>  <p>A grouped bar chart comparing support for biotechnology in Queensland before and after a forum. The y-axis represents the percentage of respondents. The x-axis lists response categories: no response, strongly opposed, opposed, neutral, support, and Strongly support. The legend indicates blue bars for 'before forum' and dark red bars for 'after forum'.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Before forum (%)</th> <th>After forum (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>no response</td> <td>2.7</td> <td>1.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>strongly opposed</td> <td>1.4</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>opposed</td> <td>4.1</td> <td>1.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>neutral</td> <td>31.1</td> <td>18.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>support</td> <td>36.4</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strongly support</td> <td>24.3</td> <td>28.4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Before forum (%)	After forum (%)	no response	2.7	1.4	strongly opposed	1.4	0	opposed	4.1	1.4	neutral	31.1	18.8	support	36.4	50	Strongly support	24.3	28.4	<p>In Queensland, those in support of biotechnology rose by 17.7%.</p>
Response	Before forum (%)	After forum (%)																				
no response	2.7	1.4																				
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STATES WITH MORATORIUM – WHEN TO LIFT BAN

<p>SA- do you believe farmers should have access to approved GM crop varieties?</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>55%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response/unsure</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	Yes	55%	No	25%	No response/unsure	20%	<p>A majority of participants in both SA and WA believed the moratorium should be lifted and access to GM crops be granted to farmers.</p>	
Response	Percentage									
Yes	55%									
No	25%									
No response/unsure	20%									
<p>WA- when should WA GM ban be lifted?</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2008</td> <td>42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2009</td> <td>23%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>18%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td>17%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Response	Percentage	2008	42%	2009	23%	Other	18%	Never	17%
Response	Percentage									
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See **Appendices 3 to 8** for brief overviews of the forums conducted in each state.

CONCLUSION

The information forums were designed to present and address the need for accurate and impartial information on agricultural biotechnology in rural and regional Australia, and assist in decision making about whether to adopt this technology. The forums in the southern states were intended to, and promoted as, an opportunity to provide growers who may consider growing GM canola with production and marketing information.

Feedback from the forums identified that the information shared at these events was useful in presenting information to enable individuals to make informed decisions and to consider the economic, farming practice, social and managerial implications of producing GM crops.

Discussion at the forums allowed participants to express their views and seek further information from presenters, including clarification on Australia's regulatory system and the role of government agencies such as the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) and Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ).

APPENDIX 1 – SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Professor Alan Bell, who holds a position as Professor Emeritus with Cornell University, USA, has been Chief of CSIRO Livestock Industries since 2007. He is a highly distinguished researcher in the areas of nutritional physiology of pregnancy, lactation and growth in cattle and sheep. Professor Bell believes that the future holds great promise for CSIRO Livestock Industries with its research portfolio expected to further evolve, meeting the needs of a wider stakeholder group.

Jeff Bidstrup with his wife and two sons produce dry land grain and cotton near Warra on the Northern Darling Downs, and operate a property near Condamine on the Western Downs where cotton, grain, peanuts and cattle are produced. Jeff was awarded the Queensland Landcare Primary Producer of the Year and Australian Cotton Grower of the Year Awards. He has been a director of the Cotton Research and Development Corporation for six years, and is currently a director of Cotton Seed Distributors which is the co-operative with the licence to market CSIRO germplasm in Australia and globally, and the licences to use Monsanto and Bayer GM traits. Jeff is also Chairman of AgBiotech Australia, a small biopesticide manufacturer which is the pre-eminent supplier of NPV to the Australian horticulture and summer grain industry. Jeff's experience with GM cotton and his concern that other Australian farmers were being denied access to a very valuable technology led him to convene the Producers

Forum. The Producers Forum is an Australia wide group of farmers who want to see Australian producers have access to the best technologies available including biotechnology.

Andrew Broad runs a mixed farming operation at Bridgewater in Central Victoria. With his father Merv, they have seeded 2400 acres of wheat, 450 acres of canola and 130 acres of vetch/oats this season. They also run merino weathers for wool and produce prime lambs that are finished on irrigated lucerne. In 2005, Andrew was awarded a Nuffield Farming Scholarship, and researched “best practice canola production; exploring biotechnology and agronomic advancements.” In 2006 as part of that scholarship, Andrew travelled to New Zealand, USA, Canada, The Netherlands, UK, France, Germany, and Ukraine. He has since briefed members of the Federal Government on current global agricultural issues and biotechnology. Andrew is current Victorian director of the Future Farmers Network, sits on the board of the Victorian Farmers Federation Young Agribusiness Professionals, and is a member of the State Council of the National party. In July 2007 he will represent the National Farmers Federation as one of ten Australian delegates at the World Congress of Young Farmers in Argentina and Brazil.

Graham Brookes is a director of PG Economics Limited UK, an economic consultancy serving agriculture and natural resource-based industries, which he founded with Peter Barfoot in 1999. Mr. Brookes

specializes in agricultural economics, agricultural policy, evaluation, trade and marketing and assessing the economic impact of new technology. He has published more than 30 papers assessing the economics of various agricultural and natural resource use systems, the policies that govern them and their prospects in trade. Prior to founding PG Economics, Mr. Brookes held positions including managing director and agricultural marketing and economics consultant for CEAS Consultants (Wye) Ltd, Wye College. He also previously taught economics at the University of Exeter and served in a research capacity at the University of Newcastle. Mr. Brookes received both his bachelor's and master's degrees in economics from the University of Exeter. He is a member of the Agricultural Economics Society. PG Economics Limited is a specialist provider of advisory and consultancy services to agriculture and other natural-resource-based industries. Based in Dorchester, United Kingdom, its specializations are plant biotechnology, agricultural production systems, agricultural markets and policy. The company's clients come from both the public and private sector and include the United Kingdom, the European Commission, food manufacturers and leading global agricultural input suppliers.

Dr Lucy Carter has an extensive background in applied ethics in the research environment. For the past decade she has been involved in providing independent ethics advice in a number of key areas including biotechnology, education and health. In 2007 Dr Carter completed a PhD in bioethics and has since provided ethics advice on a range of projects for Government, academia and the private sector. Dr Carter currently holds a position as Honorary Research

Consultant at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, and is an active member of a human research ethics committee. At present she divides her time between teaching, research and consulting.

Phillip Clamp is Quality Assurance Manager for GrainCorp Operations Limited. Graincorp is the dominant bulk grain handling company on the east coast of Australia servicing the needs of the domestic and international grain markets. GrainCorp's storage and handling infrastructure includes 284 country sites and nine port terminals, which have rail and/or road links used to transport grain to domestic and international markets. GrainCorp currently manages more than 50 discrete segregations through its supply chain. GrainCorp trades grain each year to the domestic market (including markets for feedlots, stock feed, industrial, human consumption) and exports bulk canola, barley, sorghum and containerised wheat to up to 10 countries. Phillip is responsible for GrainCorp's management systems covering quality, food safety and environment. He is responsible for design, implementation, monitoring and improving system outputs. He has developed QA systems for GM/Non-GM co-existence within grain handling and marketing systems with his involvement in the Single Vision grains Australia 'Delivering Market Choice Document' and he has also been involved in research on the topic including field studies where segregation, sampling and testing when GM canola was mixed with Non-GM canola as part of the DAFF/CSIRO/Bulk Handling Industry research project (2004) "Segregating GM and non-GM grain in the Australian Grain Storage System".

John Coté, farmer and businessman, operates Lumec Farms Ltd. near Leask, Saskatchewan, Canada with his wife, Barb and their four children Joshua, Erin, Morgan and Lyndon. Lumec Farms Ltd. is a production grain farm with 2700 acres under cultivation and in the past, has been involved in a bulk fuel and farm supply distributorship in Northern Saskatchewan. John has a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Saskatchewan and is a professional member of the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrology. He has completed the Canadian Agricultural Lifetime Leadership Program and has represented the province of Saskatchewan on the Beginning Farmers Team, a project of the Canadian Farm Business Management Council. In 2001, John was recognised as one of Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers. Most recently, John has worked as an agronomic consultant in Kazakhstan.

Robert Curtotti joined the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) in 1990 and is currently the Manager of ABARE's Fisheries Section in the Productivity, Water and Fisheries Branch. Robert specialises in the use of quantitative models to analyse economic issues. In particular, he has extensive experience in the theory and application of general equilibrium models to the analysis of international commodity markets. He is an author of many ABARE publications that focus on international commodity trade in the Asian region. From September 2007 to May 2008 he managed the Biosecurity/Biotechnology Section where he gained an in depth knowledge of GM crop related issues. Robert has a Bachelor of Economics and a Master's degree in the Economics of Development, both from

the Australian National University. In his presentation Mr Curtotti presented an outline of international trends in production and markets for GM crops, including both the better known crops such as Soybean, Cotton, Maize and Canola, and a range of lesser crops in India and China.

Scott Day was born and raised on the family farm at Dand, Manitoba, an hour southwest of Brandon, Manitoba, the fifth generation in his family to farm in the area. The farm is 40kms from the USA and 70kms from Saskatchewan right in the heart of the Prairies. He lives near the exact centre of North America, in one of the harshest climates anywhere that food is produced. He currently farms there with his parents and lives in nearby Deloraine with his wife Ann and 12 year old daughter Alex. He received a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from the University of Manitoba in 1987. He has had agricultural work experience in Europe (Ireland), Ukraine (2000) and Australia (1987-88), and he was a Provincial Ag Rep for Southwest Manitoba from 1989 - 2005. In 2005 Scott became the new Diversification Specialist for Manitoba Agriculture in Southwest Manitoba. His new job focuses on innovative ideas and opportunities for Prairie Farmers with an emphasis on the agronomics of zero till and sustainable production. With this position he also manages an applied research farm to help implement some of these goals. Scott is one of the coordinators of Ag Days – held each January in Brandon, Manitoba. It is the largest indoor Ag show in Canada. In 1999, Scott was named Canadian 0-Till farmer of the Year by the Manitoba-North Dakota 0-Till Farmer's Association. His family was also named Conservation Farm Family of the Year in 1999 by the Local Conservation District. Their family farm consists of 1600 acres of a

wide variety of crops, all 0-till for at least the past 14 years. After 45 years the Day Family closed the doors on their small Hog feeder operation in Dec '07.

Paula Fitzgerald is the inaugural Executive Director of Agrifood Awareness Australia Limited - an industry initiative established to increase public awareness of, and to encourage informed debate and decision-making about, gene technology in Australia. The organisation has three founding members - National Farmers' Federation, CropLife Australia and the Grains Research and Development Corporation. Prior to her appointment to Agrifood Awareness Australia, Paula was the Public Affairs Manager for the largest Division of Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) - CSIRO Plant Industry is one of the world's leading research institutes, recognised internationally in the field of plant molecular biology. Paula has spent almost fifteen years working in the biotechnology area. She has published numerous articles on biotechnology and has been an invited speaker at over 200 science, industry and public conferences and events, both nationally and internationally. Paula is currently the Chair of the Advisory Board of the Centre for Integrated Legume Research (CILR), a Director of the ABIC Foundation, a Member of the NSW Farmers' Association Biotechnology Taskforce, a Member of the Safe Meat Gene Technology Subcommittee, and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Dr Trevor Garnett, following undergraduate studies at the University of Adelaide, travelled to Tasmania where he obtained a PhD in plant physiology from the University of

Tasmania, graduating in 1996 (Thesis: Ammonium and nitrate uptake by *Eucalyptus nitens*). In 1997 he returned to Adelaide as a post-doc in Plant Science at the University of Adelaide investigating micronutrient nutrition of wheat. At the beginning of 2001 he took up a contract lecturing position teaching plant nutrition in the Faculty of Agriculture. From March 2001 until January 2006 Trevor held a position with the South Australian Research and Development Institute (SARDI) where he managed an ACIAR funded project collaborating with China and Laos. The main aim of this project is to find and develop lucernes with tolerance to abiotic stress. Since January 2006 he has been a Research Fellow at the ACPFG, managing the Nitrogen Use Efficiency program. The core of this program is a collaborative project with DuPont Pioneer in the US aimed at increasing the nitrogen use efficiency of cereals. This project will identify nitrogen-linked traits in cereals through genetic, physiological and electrophysiological analysis of existing lines showing variation in NUE with particular focus on characterizing mechanisms controlling accumulation, storage and redistribution of inorganic and organic nitrogen. This research should lead to novel discoveries in nitrogen-linked traits in cereals and eventuate in improved NUE cereal lines in future genetic enhancement programs

David Hubbard is a Business and Innovation Consultant, based in Adelaide and working for Rural Solutions SA a consultancy business servicing the rural community, primary producers and small to medium organizations across the State. David consults in the areas of innovation, facilitation, business and succession plans. He has work within the sheep and alpaca research and as a Property

management planning officer at Murray Bridge. More recently he has been writing business plans for the drought recovery program.

Dr Andrew Jacobs has a Bachelor of Science degree with Honours from the Flinders University of South Australia. His Honours research project was conducted at the Flinders Medical Centre where he investigated the use of a transgenic mouse model for mutation studies. Dr Jacobs then worked for CSIRO Plant Industry for 3.5 years where he investigated plant pathogen interactions in grapevine before he took up a PhD scholarship at the University of Adelaide. During his PhD studies he isolated the gene responsible for the formation of callose at sites of fungal infection in Arabidopsis leaves and spent six months characterising the effects of mutations in this gene at the Max-Planck-Institute for Plant breeding research in Cologne. Dr Jacobs took up a Research Fellow position at the Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics in 2003 and leads the Enabling Technologies group and Gene Analysis team. His current research projects are focussed upon the genes involved in abiotic stress tolerance and perception with an emphasis on salinity tolerance and developing improved tools and greater resources for the analysis of these genes. He mentors several honours and PhD students working in the area of abiotic stress tolerance and has published a number of articles in peer reviewed journals. He also has a number of patents in the area of biotechnology.

Max Foster is a Principal Economist with the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARE) in Canberra. He brings more than twenty years of commodity analysis and agricultural economics

research to bear on the issue of the economic implications of biotechnology. He has been responsible for a number of ABARE publications on the many facets of this issue. Max has made numerous presentations on the economics of agricultural biotechnology to Australian and international forums.

Mark Lunney is an Associate Professor of the School of Law at the University of New England, a Fellow of the Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law (based at UNE), and an Adjunct Research Fellow of the Australian Centre for Intellectual Property in Agriculture (based at the University of Queensland, the Australian National University, and Griffith University). He has written extensively on tort liability in both Australia and the United Kingdom, and is co-author of *The Law of Torts in Australia* (4th ed, 2007) (with Francis Trindade and Peter Cane) and *Legal Liability for Growing Crops* (DAFF, 2006) (with Robert Burrell).

Jeanette Marszal is the Technical Services Manager, Storage and Handling in ABB Grain Ltd. Jeanette has worked in technical areas in the grain industry since 1985. She is currently a member of the NACMA standards committee, Pulse Australia standards committee, Pulse SA Chair, and National Standards Commission committee for Grain Measurement. Jeanette is responsible for the implementation of specifications, standards and procedures to commodity quality standards for ABB National Supply Chain.

Geoff Masters is the Quality & Technical Services Manager with ABB Grain Limited. He graduated from Roseworthy Agricultural College in 1978 and after 9 months working in Alberta, Canada, Geoff started as a

field officer with AWB. After a 3 year stint he joined AQIS working in the grains export area. He then joined SACBH in 1993, working on the implementation of an accredited Quality Management System. Since then he has held various positions with ABB (previously SACBH and AusBulk) including Quality Services Manager, Client Services Manager, Client & Quality Services Manager and now Quality & Technical Services Manager. In his current role he is responsible for the management and delivery of Grain Quality Services, Laboratory and Technical Services, Grain Hygiene & Pest Control and Quality Assurance & Systems across ABB Grain Ltd. He is also responsible for the development of policy and relationships for ABB in a number of quality related areas, including GM grains, AQIS, Biosecurity Australia and Free Trade Agreements. In respect to GM grains, he has been involved with the AOF Gene technology Grains Committee, the Australian Bulk Handling Association GM Working Group and the 2006 SA GM Forum Roadshow. With Mr David Thomas, in July 2003 he represented AusBulk at submissions to the SA Government Select Committee on Genetically Modified Organisms. In 2005, he worked with the Oil Seed Rape (OSR) Response Team that coordinated the industry response to the detection of the Topas 19/2 gene in Australian Canola. Within ABB, he has been responsible for the development and review of the procedures for the segregation and handling grains as a result of the introduction of GM crops, including the development of ABB's submissions in respect to the various reviews of the GM crop moratoriums.

Alexandra Pelvin works in the Public Awareness Section of Biotechnology Australia, which aims

to increase the public's general awareness of biotechnology and its uses, and to enable Australians to make more informed decisions about biotechnology applications. She has Bachelor degrees in English and Psychology and a Graduate Diploma in Professional Communication. Prior to working with Biotechnology Australia, Alexandra was a science communicator at CSIRO Division of Plant Industry and worked in the Public Relations section of the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service.

Professor Jim Pratley began his career as a lecturer in Plant Science at the then Wagga Wagga Agricultural College in 1972 and later became lecturer in Agronomy at the former Riverina Murray Institute of Higher Education in 1976. He was appointed Charles Sturt University's (CSU) inaugural Dean of the Faculty of Science and Agriculture in 1990. In recognition of Professor Pratley's outstanding service to CSU and his commitment to agricultural research, he has been awarded the title Emeritus Professor, only the fifth such appointment in CSU's history. His research interests include tillage systems, herbicide resistance and allelopathy of weeds and crops. His resistance work identified the first worldwide incidence of evolved resistance to the herbicide Roundup.

Dr Christopher Preston is a Program Leader for the Cooperative Research Centre for Weed Management and Head of the Discipline Plant & Food Science in the School of Agriculture at the University of Adelaide. Dr Preston is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Agriculture & Wine at the University of Adelaide and an internationally renowned researcher on herbicide resistance in weeds. He has travelled extensively in

North America and other parts of the world and seen herbicide tolerant and other biotech crops used. Dr Preston's research interests cover a range of weed management issues. These include the evolution, biochemical mechanisms of herbicide resistant weeds, gene flow from herbicide tolerant crops and its implications for farm management, risk assessment for weeds and herbicide tolerant crops and patterns of genetic diversity in weed populations. In 2001 he won the GRDC Seed of Light Award for Scientific Communication.

Dr Alan Richardson is a Senior Principal Research Scientist with CSIRO's Division of Plant Industry in Canberra. He is the Group Leader for "Soil Biology and Root Growth" in the Division's Program on "High Performance Crops for Australia". His research interests address the molecular biology of plant nutrition with particular emphasis on the efficiency of phosphorus utilization by plants. He holds an Agricultural Science Degree and is a PhD graduate of the University of Melbourne. Dr Richardson also chairs the CSIRO Plant Industry Institutional Biosafety Committee, which oversees the regulation of the Division's research on gene technology.

Professor Rick Roush's career spans research, teaching, regulatory, and administrative appointments in both the US and Australia. Rick earned his Ph.D. in entomology from the University of California, Berkeley in 1979. Before joining the University of Adelaide in 1995, Roush was an associate professor at Mississippi State and Cornell Universities. After

working 8 years in Adelaide, including as Director of the Cooperative Research Centre for Weed Management (1998-2003), Rick returned to California in March 2003 to become Director of the University of California (UC) State-wide Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program. As Director, Rick has responsibilities for guiding UC research and extension on a wide range of problems, such as reducing pesticide use, containment and management of newly introduced pests in natural ecosystems, and advice for urban gardeners. In 2004, Roush was also appointed acting Director of the UC Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program. Roush has held senior committee appointments in the US and Australia, including on a committee reviewing pesticide resistance for the US National Academy of Sciences (1984-86) and to the Australian government genetic engineering regulatory committees, GMAC and GTTAC (1998-2003). Roush has been internationally recognized for his research on pest management since the 1980s, and has published widely on biological control, genetics, toxicology, and the ecology of insects, mites and weeds. A particular emphasis has been to develop integrated solutions for slowing or preventing the evolution of pesticide resistance. Roush has been involved in pest management efforts in China, the Philippines, Malaysia, South Africa and India. In the 1990's, Roush was a principal architect of the resistance management strategies for insect tolerant transgenic (GM) crops, including cotton, potatoes and corn in several countries.

Professor Trevor Stevenson is the Leader of the School of Applied Sciences' Plant Biotechnology Research Group and a lecturer at RMIT. Until the end of 1990 was the Principal Scientist on the Flower Colour Modification program at Calgene Pacific (now Florigene). Genetically engineered carnations modified for flower colour developed from that research were released for commercial sale in 1996. Research interest focus is on the use of molecular biology and gene transfer technology applied to plant productions systems; Specifically the use of high level foreign gene expression systems to transfer and express proteins of economic or agricultural importance in crop plants. Current research activities are examining the use of genetic modification of crop plant residues to enhance their suitability as lignocellulosic feedstock for the sustainable production of biofuels via fermentation. As part of this approach research into the use chloroplasts as sites for foreign gene expression is currently being explored.

Dr Peter Twine is the CEO of the CRC for Sugar Industry Innovation Through Biotechnology. Peter Twine is the CEO of the CRC for Sugar Industry Innovation through Biotechnology. Peter has spent the last 17 years working in research and development for the Australian sugar industry, first as Manager of Research, Development and Extension at BSES, and for the last 5 years with the CRC. The CRC is a Joint Venture of Australian and overseas groups making a serious commitment to identifying and commercialising biotechnology-based opportunities for sugarcane.

David Thomason is Marketing General Manager at Meat and

Livestock Australia (MLA). He has spent over 30 years in sales and marketing roles within the Australian food industry, initially with Cottees and then with George Weston Foods.

David joined Meat & Livestock Australia in 1998 to develop and implement strategies that grow consumer demand for Australian beef and lamb. Particular focus has been improving meat quality, revitalising Lamb, identifying and developing nutritional opportunities for red meat, and improving retail promotion and education.

APPENDIX 2 – PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

QUALITY OF FORUM

“This it the best way (forum) as it allows growers to ask questions. Mail-outs are good but risk getting ignored! Growers must be proactive and attend the forums.” (NSW)

“Very clear speakers who didn’t appear to be biased but had a clear view of the issues” (Vic)

“The very few farmers attending these meetings is of concern.” (SA)

“A good range of speakers from a cross section of agriculture. Speakers did well to minimise repetition in their presentations.” (NSW)

“All speakers had a very different aspect to speak about. I am glad I came.” (Vic)

“The information presented was interesting, relevant but one-sided. No balance!” (SA)

“Spend less time on lecture part of forum and more on group questions and discussion.” (NSW)

WILL YOU PLANT GM CANOLA?

“As soon as the seed is available – Over my 60 years of farming I have willingly accepted new research and technology to improve farming. I have faith in the research officers and scientists to be confident in accepting their findings.” (SA)

“Never – it does not fit the ‘niche’ profile we aspire to, as a region as well as personally.” (SA)

“As soon as seed is available – bring it on.” (SA)

“Still uncertain at this stage – health, markets, food, security, risks too high.” (SA)

CONCERNS

“A major problem with GT is the control of technology exerted by a few major Biotech Companies over ‘genotypes.’ (Tas)

“concern with a risk of development of ‘super weeds.’” (Tas)

“Non-GM growers should have legal protection if they want to remain non-GM.” (SA)

“Much more needs to be done to educate farmers on the dangers of Roundup resistance and how to manage it.” (NSW)

APPENDIX 3 - NEW SOUTH WALES

Location	Date	No. of Attendees	Guest Speakers
Parkes	25 September 2007	18	Ms Paula Fitzgerald <i>Agrifood Awareness Australia</i> Mr Andrew Broad <i>Nuffield scholar and farmer</i> Mr John Cote <i>Canadian farmer and agronomist</i> Mr Jeff Bidstrup <i>Cotton and grain grower from QLD</i>
Beckom	26 September 2007	32	Mr Phil Clamp <i>Quality Assurance Manager, Graincorp Operations Ltd</i> Dr Chris Preston <i>National Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group</i>
Cootamundra	27 September 2007	25	Graham Brookes <i>Principal of PG Economics, UK</i> Mr Max Foster <i>Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i> Professor Jim Pratley <i>Charles Sturt University</i>

New South Wales was the pilot project. The meetings were not planned as a forum for a debate for or against GM technology. They were intended to, and promoted as, an opportunity to provide growers who may consider growing GM canola with production and marketing information. Attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters at the end of each session.

Information presented at the forums covered the gene technology regulatory system, Australian cotton growing experience with GM, the Canadian experience with GM canola, managing chemical resistance weeds, a farmer's view of the uses of GM canola on his farm, coexistence of GM and non-GM grains, managing GM and non-GM canola in the grain handling system, the global impacts of growing GM crops, a review of the main findings of ABARE reports on GM issues, and a report on a GM canola trial undertaken by researchers at Charles Sturt University.

Attendees were mainly concerned with the cost of using GM canola varieties, technology use agreements, royalties, seed and identity preservation, the degree of decision-making control retained by the grower, the marketability of GM canola, the impact on organic growers, managing glyphosate resistance, and the reliability of the media as a source of information for farmers and the general public.

Results of the attendee evaluation showed 78 per cent of those surveyed found the information presented at the forum useful and 96 per cent rated the quality of the speakers as good or excellent. 96 per cent felt the information presented was an objective and accurate view of agricultural biotechnology and 98 per cent said they would encourage others to attend similar forums.

APPENDIX 4 - VICTORIA

Location	Date	No. of Attendees	Guest Speakers
Dookie	19 February 2008	51	Mr Geoff Kendall <i>VFF Grains Executive</i> Professor Richard Roush <i>Dean of Agriculture, Melbourne University</i>
Swan Hill	20 February 2008	17	Mr Scott Day <i>Canadian farmer</i> Ass. Prof. Mark Lunney <i>University of New England</i> Mr Phil Clamp <i>Quality Assurance Manager, Graincorp Operations Ltd</i>
Murtoa	21 February 2008	39	Dr Chris Preston <i>National Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group</i>

The forums were designed to provide growers who may consider growing GM canola with production and marketing information. The forums allowed for formal presentations as well as rigorous debate between presenters and attendees.

Information presented at the forums covered the global adoption of agricultural biotechnology, weed resistance management, the Canadian experience with GM canola, legal and liability issues relating to growing GM crops, coexistence of GM and non-GM grains, and managing GM and non-GM canola in the grain handling system.

Attendees were mainly concerned with the cost of using GM canola varieties, food labelling, seed and identity preservation, the marketability of GM canola, managing glyphosate resistance, the impact on organic growers, health impacts from consumption of GM foods, potential adverse effects to the environment and methods for informing the community of the safety of GM foods.

Results of the attendee evaluation showed 94 per cent of those surveyed thought the information was easy to understand and 96 per cent felt the information was relevant to GM cropping. 92 per cent had an increased knowledge of GM after attending the forum and 72 per cent rated the quality of the speakers as very good. 61 per cent said they were likely or very likely to include GM canola in their cropping plans.

APPENDIX 5 - SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Location	Date	No. of Attendees	Guest Speakers
Keith	25 February 2008	21	Dr Trevor Garnett <i>Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics</i>
Kadina	26 February 2008	38	Dr Andrew Jacobs <i>Australian Centre for Plant Functional Genomics</i>
Lock	27 February 2008	26	Mr David Hubbard <i>Primary Industries and Resources South Australia</i>
Nuriootpa	28 February 2008	19	Mr Geoff Masters <i>Client Services, ABB Grain Ltd</i> Dr Chris Preston <i>National Glyphosate Sustainability Working Group</i> Mr Scott Day <i>Canadian farmer</i>

These forums followed the announcement from the South Australian Government on 8 February 2008 that the GM moratorium would continue. Given that decisions had already been made in Victoria and New South Wales to allow the growing of GM canola, it had been anticipated during the planning of these forums that there would be a similar decision in South Australia; and it was felt the forums would be able to offer details to farmers so that they could make decisions on whether to grow GM canola. The decision of the State Government meant that this focus was not as relevant, however it was decided that this was still an opportunity to provide information about GM crops.

Information presented at the forums covered the Canadian experience with GM canola, herbicide resistance, coexistence of GM and non-GM crops, managing GM and non-GM canola in the grain handling system, the moratorium in South Australia, and a cost/benefit analysis of GM crops.

Attendees were mainly concerned with the impact on organic growers, religious objections to the introduction of GM crops, lack of information disseminated to farmers, segregation of GM and non-GM crops, whether to lift the SA moratorium, managing chemical resistant weeds, and the marketability of GM canola.

Results of the attendee evaluation showed 66 per cent of those surveyed felt the forums had given them sufficient knowledge and confidence to participate in debate with colleagues, growers industry groups etc. 45 per cent rated the forums as providing balanced and credible information and 57 per cent felt the information was relevant to GM cropping.

APPENDIX 6 - TASMANIA

Location	Date	No. of Attendees	Guest Speakers
Kempton	27 May 2008	1	Dr Alan Richardson <i>CSIRO Plant Industry</i>
Burnie	28 May 2008	9	Dr Lucy Carter <i>Research Consultant, Ethics Training & Consultancy Australia</i>
Launceston	29 May 2008	21	Ms Alexandra Pelvin <i>Biotechnology Australia</i> Mr Robert Curtotti <i>Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics</i>

The objective was to address the need for accurate and balanced information on agricultural biotechnology and assist in decision making about whether to adopt GM technology. Four specific topics were selected for consideration in the forums (listed below), given a wish to treat individual topics in reasonable detail but recognising necessary time constraints. The absence of other topics, such as food safety, legal issues, and co-existence concerns, was not because these topics were less important, but simply that it was considered necessary to limit the scope for detailed discussion within the timeframe.

The meetings were not planned as a forum for a debate for or against GM technology. Attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters at the end of each session.

Information presented at the forums covered the science behind gene technology and its application to agricultural crops, ethical issues, consumer acceptance, and the global adoption of agricultural biotechnology.

Attendees were mainly concerned with food safety, the market power of major biotech companies, potential adverse effects to the environment, the impact on organic growers, the marketability of GM canola, herbicide resistance, and maintaining an effective moratorium on GM now Vic and NSW have removed their moratoria.

Results of the attendee evaluation showed 76 per cent felt the forum provided a platform for them to express their thoughts and 58 per cent agreed that the speakers had presented information in a way that increased their awareness of agricultural biotechnology. 82 per cent said they would attend another forum to further their knowledge of agricultural biotechnology in primary industries.

APPENDIX 7 - WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Location	Date	No. of Attendees	Guest Speakers
Dalwallinu	4 March 2008	78	Mrs Julie Newman <i>Chair of Network of Concerned Farmers</i> Dr Phil Davies <i>Researcher, Adelaide University</i>
Corrigin	5 March 2008	71	Mr Alan Marshal <i>Farmer, Lake Grace</i> Mr Bill Crabtree <i>Independent Consultant</i> Professor Richard Roush <i>Dean of Agriculture, Melbourne University</i>
Dongara	6 March 2008	90	Mr Jeff Bidstrup <i>Chair of Producers Forum</i>

The goal was to allow farmers and members of the community to have access to information on agricultural biotechnology from both sides of the debate. Two of the three forums took the form of a debate, designed to present a balanced point of view to enable farmers and industry to make informed choices with respect of GM issues. Attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions of the presenters at the end of each session.

Information presented at the forums covered the Canadian experience with GM canola, cost/benefit of GM crops, managing herbicide resistant weeds, marketing of GM canola, the moratorium on GM crops, the science behind gene technology and its application to agricultural crops, pollen transfer, Australian cotton growing experience with GM, GM and non-GM segregation, the impact on organic growers and the global adoption of biotechnology in agriculture.

Attendees were mainly concerned with the degree of decision-making control retained by the grower, the marketability of GM canola, the impact on organic growers, managing glyphosate resistance, segregation of GM and non-GM crops, the cost of using GM canola varieties, food safety, and the potential adverse effects to the environment.

Results of the attendee evaluation showed 82 per cent had gained new information while 47 per cent said their attitudes towards GM crops changed as a result of the forums. Greater than 90 per cent of the change was towards being more accepting of GMs. 66 per cent of attendees wanted the ban on GM crops lifted in 2008 or 2009, while 17 per cent of those surveyed never wanted the ban lifted.

APPENDIX 8 - QUEENSLAND

Location	Date	No. of Attendees	Guest Speakers
Dalby	1 April 2008	66	Prof Alan Bell <i>CSIRO</i> Dr Lucy Carter <i>Research Consultant, Ethics Training & Consultancy Australia</i>
Emerald	2 April 2008	53	Dr Peter Twine <i>CEO, Sugar Cane CRC</i>
Mackay	3 April 2008	22	Mr David Thomason <i>Meat and Livestock Australia</i> Mr Phil Clamp <i>Quality Assurance Manager, Graincorp Operations Ltd</i> Prof Trevor Stevenson <i>RMIT</i>

The objective of the forums was to distribute information relevant to producers of crops and livestock, and support service providers, on relevant agricultural applications for biotechnology. The forums focused broadly on a range of biotechnology issues and were designed to educate producers on regulatory processes for genetically modified organisms, and to provide expert opinion on industry specific technology applications and commodity marketing/consumer attitudes.

Information presented at the forums covered 3 broad issues of the application of biotechnology: regulation, technology options and market implications. Specific topics included regulation options, ethical considerations on GM crops and foods, existing and potential GM applications for livestock, biofuels, and consumer choice, and market access.

Results of the attendee evaluation showed the forums had increased support for the use of biotechnology, with the high or very high categories increasing by 18 per cent to 78.4 per cent. 57 per cent of attendees said they will consider using biotechnology in their business.